

World Health Assembly to be subject to Senate ratification.

S. 473

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 473, a bill to provide for drone security.

S. 524

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 524, a bill to eliminate disparity in sentencing for cocaine offenses, and for other purposes.

S. 532

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 532, a bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

S. 547

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 547, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 548

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 548, a bill to enhance the security of the United States and its allies, and for other purposes.

S. 558

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 558, a bill to codify Executive Order 13950 (relating to combatting race and sex stereotyping), and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. ROUNDS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COTTON, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. WARNOCK, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 596. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make employers of spouses of military personnel eligible for the work opportunity credit; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, today I am introducing the Military Spouse Hiring Act with my colleagues Senators BOOZMAN, HASSAN, ROUNDS, and

17 of our colleagues. Enacting this bill would improve financial stability for Blue Star families across the country.

The families of America's servicemembers make sacrifices that often go unrecognized. Among them is packing up and moving frequently, with military spouses regularly having to leave stable employment to move to a new area and start over. This is compounded by the complex system of State licensing and certification requirements, which can prevent these spouses from taking jobs that utilize their expertise and experience. Because of this, military spouses have unemployment rates substantially higher than the national average, and they are often underemployed when they do have jobs. Adding to the financial struggles caused by frequent periods of unemployment and underemployment, the rising cost of childcare puts a substantial burden on many military families.

The Military Spouse Hiring Act would help these families by making military spouses an eligible population for the work opportunity tax credit. This tax credit has proven effective in improving employment prospects for other groups. Extending it to military spouses would help them find employment more easily after moving to new areas.

I hope my colleagues will support this bill to help families who have made the greatest sacrifice for our Nation.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KING, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. SMITH, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 597. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today, along with my colleague Senator BROWN, to introduce the Social Security Fairness Act. The bipartisan bill would repeal two Social Security provisions that unfairly penalize many public servants in Maine and in other States.

Social Security is the foundation of retirement income for most Americans. This crucial program has made the difference between poverty and a comfortable retirement for millions of seniors. Yet, some teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other public servants often see their earned Social Security benefits unfairly reduced by two Social Security provisions: the windfall elimination provision and the Government pension offset.

The Windfall elimination provision or W-E-P affects public servants who receive a pension from a job where they did not pay into Social Security but who also worked long enough in another job to qualify for Social Security benefits. Due to the WEP, their Social Security benefits are calculated using a different formula, which can reduce their monthly benefits. For workers who become eligible for benefits in 2023, the WEP reduction can be up to \$557.50 per month, subject to other adjustments.

The Government Pension Offset GPO affects public servants who receive a pension from a job where they did not pay into Social Security and are also eligible to receive a Social Security spousal or widow(er)'s benefit. However, the GPO reduces Social Security spousal or widow(er)'s benefits by an amount equal to two-thirds of the non-covered pension.

According to the Social Security Administration, in December 2022, more than 2 million people, including nearly 20,500 people in Maine, had their Social Security benefits reduced by the WEP. Similarly, nearly 735,000 people were affected by the GPO in December 2022, including more than 8,100 people in Maine. While the effects of the WEP and GPO are most acute in certain States, including Maine, data from the Social Security Administration indicate that these provisions affect public servants in all 50 States.

Many Maine teachers have spoken with me about how the WEP and GPO affect their retirement security. I recently heard from a special education teacher in Kennebec who has spent more than 40 years teaching and also held a second job in the private sector to help support her family after becoming a single parent. Due to the WEP, she is concerned about her financial security once she retires. A retiree in Mount Desert also reached out to me recently to share his story. He wants to make sure his wife, who is a public servant, will be taken care of after he is gone. Due to the GPO, he is concerned that any Social Security widow's benefits his wife receives will be substantially reduced.

The bill we are introducing today, the Social Security Fairness Act, would repeal both the WEP and the GPO for Social Security benefits payable after December 2023. This means current Social Security beneficiaries would have their benefits recalculated without applying the WEP and GPO. Teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other public servants currently in the workforce would no longer have to worry about having their Social Security benefits unfairly reduced in the future. Those who are considering careers in public service would no longer have to weigh the potential negative effects of this choice on their future retirement security.

Our dedicated public servants, such as our teachers who help prepare our